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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Khaddam's Statements to Al-Arabiya TV (1/1-3)

11. Summary: Syrian newspapers attacked former Vice President Abdul-Halim Khaddam over his statements to Al-Arabiya Television, in which claimed that President Bashar al-Asad threatened former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri several months before he was assassinated.

Papers reported a statement by the National Leadership of the Ba'th Party regarding Khaddam's expulsion from the Party, which called him "a traitor to the party and Syria," and saying that he has deviated from party principles, values and traditions. The statement depicted Khaddam as "joining the chorus of those hostile to Syria," pointing out that "he is involved in the US-Israeli scheme to strike Syria's steadfastness."

Papers also reported the People's Assembly's call for prosecuting Khaddam for high treason.

Commentators condemned Khaddam's statement and "betrayal" of his country and people. Chief Editor of government-owned Tishreen, Dr. Khalaf al-Jarrad, cast doubts on Khaddam's integrity, indicating "serious contradictions" in his statements, blaming him for Syria's mistakes in Lebanon, and wondering if Khaddam has irrevocably joined Syria's enemies.

End summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"People's Assembly asks Ministry of Justice to bring Khaddam to trail" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/3)

"Al-Ba'th Party: Khaddam is a traitor... He is dismissed" (Government-owned-Al-Thawra, 1/2)

"Khaddam's office in Paris turns into a mecca for Israeli intelligence" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/2)

"The Syrian government opens Khaddam's files of corruption" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/2)

"The National Leadership of Al-Baath Arab Socialist Party expels Abdul Halim Khaddam for his high treason to the party, homeland and the nation. The Leadership's statement says: Khaddam

recruited himself to serve hostile plots by joining the Zionist-American scheme to strike Syria. He has performed prepaid cheap service to those who wanted to incriminate Syria in the Al-Hariri assassination. Khaddam is held responsible for the major mistakes in Lebanon. The Syrian people know quite well that Khaddam is one of the main figures of corruption. Khaddam revealed his true face when he found himself outside the authority. He hindered process of reform and modernization. Choosing the homeland is not done through joining the chorus of its enemies. Renegades and degraded persons will not be an obstacle to the march of struggle" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/2)

"The Lebanese Presidency refutes and rejects Khaddam's statements to Al-Arabiya TV: Khaddam intended to distort a number of facts in order to achieve personal goals. President Lahhoud was never a provocation to the martyr Al-Hariri even for one day" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/2)

"Iranian mass media: Khaddam's statements prove his involvement in a plot targeting Syria and the whole region" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/2)

"The People's Assembly demands the prosecution of Abdul-Halim Khaddam for high treason. A session at the People's Assembly to debate Khaddam's corrupt practices and joining the band of enemies" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/1)

"Khaddam presents his credentials as a new false witness and praises Mehlis. Khaddam attacks his country from his luxurious palace in Paris and talks about the poverty of the Syrians. Khaddam uses amazing eloquence in talking about reform and corruption. Khaddam ignores his role in Lebanon over the years and throws the ball in the court of others. Khaddam announces

loyalties to well-known parties and departs from Syria's national stances" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/1)

"Khaddam joins Siddiq and Hussam and turns into an informer to Mehlis. Khaddam receives 30 million dollars to unleash accusations" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/1)

"Lebanese personalities and circles react to Khaddam's slanders: Assem Kanso: Khaddam has become the king of false witnesses. Suleiman Franjeh: Khaddam receives millions of dollars in exchange for treason. Wiam Wahab: Khaddam pursued a humiliating policy in dealing with the Lebanese affairs. Talal Arslan : Such traitors will fall away in the end and Arabism will emerge victorious" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/1)

"Kaddafi: Syria has preserved Lebanon's security" (Government-owned Tishreen 1/1)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Even You Khaddam"  
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Dr. Khalaf al-Jarrad, editor in chief of government-owned Tishreen, commented (1/1): "The main objective behind Khaddam's fabrications is to harm Syria-- country, government, and leadership.... There are serious contradictions in Khaddam's statements... The former vice president was clearly addressing the outside world because the Syrian people know everything and will not be deceived by his story....

"Khaddam's statements were not objective because they did not include a self-criticism of his practices in the party and in the government over more than 35 years. We have never heard that Khaddam was a democrat who offered a reform program or a socialist who supported the poor....

"Khaddam's sons obtained foreign nationalities while he was still in power... This shows how the corrupt ones understand the homeland and loyalty to it....

"Many observers believe Abd-al-Halim Khaddam wanted to take personal revenge and to prove his ability to 'annoy' on the one

hand and to give impetus and a kind of swift boost to the forces that are applying pressure on Syria on the other hand. He wanted to say: 'Hey, we are here. You might want to use us in the current campaign against Syria and its leadership.'

"Khaddam's defense of Detlev Mehliis, chairman of the International Investigation Commission into the Al-Hariri assassination, labels Khaddam as an advocate of the devil... Legal action must be taken against those who join the enemies' fold and stoop to the level of high treason.

"The Syrian people have absolute confidence in President Bashar al-Asad's leadership, wisdom and will for reform and development on all levels...."

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"Without Any Regret!"  
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An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Ba'th, on (1/2) reads: "Khaddam stabbed the homeland in the back on the eve of the Belgian General Attorney's assumption of his responsibility as chairman of the International Investigation Commission into the Al-Hariri assassination...."

"Khaddam chose the time that suited him and the group of plotters, as the campaign of pressure and fabrications against Syria reaches its peak.... He showed his true face, which he had disguised for more than 40 years, disregarding Syria's national interests and pan-Arab principles...."

"Khaddam is the last person to talk about poverty and freedom...."

Not only did Khaddam betray his country, but he also betrayed the principles of the Ba'th Party and showed unmatched opportunism.... Khaddam, Syria knows how to defend its rights and the interests of its sons, and how to reject such malicious germs that grow in the long Parisian shadows and now want to attack the body of this homeland and its children to satisfy senile penchants for power..."

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"Khaddam, Whom Do You Serve?" [Khaddam means "Servant"]  
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Abdul-Fattah Awad, editor in chief of government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (1/2): "Khaddam's statements serve all those who want the campaign of pressure on Syria to continue...."

"Khaddam has no right to talk about the mistakes in Lebanon because those were his mistakes...."

"The Syrian people are too clever to believe a man who assumed power for more than 35 years but when he was 'weaned' from it, he came out to criticize it... If this is an attempt to jump from one boat to another, it is clear that the result will be nothing but a fall in the mud of disappointment, which he chose as a bad end that no one had wished for him..."

"It is difficult to find a word other than 'treason' to describe Khaddam's position.... Why was there silence on Khaddam's conduct in the past [when he was in power]? How can we guarantee that another Khaddam will not appear from our midst tomorrow? With full frankness we say that this is a lesson we must learn: Criticism must also include the senior officials, who should always be subject to observation and accountability. Only this will spare us from another Khaddam..."

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"A Man for All Seasons"  
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Muhammad Khair al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, wrote (1/2): "Khaddam practiced the worst aspects of corruption.... He embezzled, looted, amassed tremendous wealth, and harmed Syria's relations with Lebanon and with many Arab and non-Arab countries..."

"Khaddam's statements serve the scheme that targets Syria, Lebanon, the Arab world, and the entire region.... Khaddam has practiced the worst form of political hypocrisy in return for money..."

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"Khaddam, We Know the Truth"  
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Izz-al-Din Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (1/2): "Khaddam's statements show that he is either mentally disabled or motivated by foreign powers with evil intentions against Syria. The second option is more likely..."

"Khaddam is responsible for corruption in Lebanon, from dirty trade to the appointment of heads and members of government.... Khaddam was obstacle number one to all reform and development steps..."

"Khaddam: You did not choose the homeland, as you claimed. You chose the enemies of the homeland. Be burned with them. Syria will remain immune."

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